

Senate Resolution 377

By: Senators Chapman of the 3rd and Thomas of the 2nd

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Jekyll Island Authority to exercise the greatest caution and restraint in its
2 supervision of the necessary redevelopment of resort and other facilities on the island; and
3 for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, Jekyll Island State Park has been the property of the people of the State of
5 Georgia for almost 60 years, during which time thousands of our citizens of all stations in
6 life and all economic means have been able to enjoy visiting this largely unspoiled barrier
7 island; and

8 WHEREAS, Jekyll Island has been preserved through the prudence of legislative action
9 setting aside 65 percent of its land area with permanent protection from development, while
10 allowing suitable construction and reconstruction on the remaining area to accommodate
11 visitors; and

12 WHEREAS, the Island's governing body, the Jekyll Island Authority, is contemplating
13 various redevelopment and new development plans for the Island, in view of the fact that
14 certain of its existing hotel and convention facilities are in need of expansion and renovation;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, others among the Island's assets, including its historic and carefully preserved
17 Historic District, its popular and heavily used 4-H center, its campground, and its world class
18 youth soccer fields, continue to serve the Island and the state and its people very well,
19 meeting numerous social and educational needs while preserving large portions of the
20 Island's natural environment; and

21 WHEREAS, Jekyll's unique appeal to tourists has historically extended beyond its attractive
22 beaches and resort facilities, and has always depended upon the natural beauty of its sand
23 dunes, marine forest, freshwater wetlands, saltwater creeks and salt marsh, and its wildlife,
24 including its amazing and unique population of birds; and

1 WHEREAS, Jekyll's south end beach is invaluable to the endangered loggerhead sea turtle,
2 nesting birds, such as the Wilson's Plover, and many species of foraging shore birds that are
3 deserving of special protection; and

4 WHEREAS, those irreplaceable natural features continue to constitute the single greatest
5 asset of this "crown jewel" of our system of State Parks, and their preservation is of the
6 highest interest to all of the people of Georgia; and

7 WHEREAS, certain among the redevelopment proposals contemplated by the Jekyll Island
8 Authority are thought to contemplate a concentration of luxury resort facilities that would
9 yield high financial returns, but that would preclude their use by Georgians of ordinary
10 means; and

11 WHEREAS, some of these luxury resort development proposals would cause the
12 construction of significant numbers of permanent single-family luxury homes and/or
13 condominium units that would be subject to long-term lease by new full-time residents,
14 increasing the permanent resident population of the Island, thereby increasing demand for
15 numerous services peculiar to such residents and increasing demands on existing
16 infrastructure; and

17 WHEREAS, such new residential construction within the boundaries of this State Park may
18 also cause displacement of other existing, low-impact land uses within the "developed"
19 portion of the Jekyll landscape, and may also inevitably negatively affect the natural systems
20 now coexisting with those low-impact uses; and

21 WHEREAS, the General Assembly of Georgia has a duty to protect all of the interests and
22 assets of the present and future citizens of this state.

23 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that this body urges the Jekyll
24 Island Authority to exercise the greatest caution and restraint in its supervision of the
25 necessary redevelopment of resort and other facilities on the island, assuring that such
26 redevelopment shall maintain the authority's statutory obligation to serve the needs of all of
27 the state's people, particularly Georgians of average income, while imposing the least
28 possible negative impact on the Island's existing natural environment.

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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body urges the Jekyll Island Authority to take such
31 steps as the authority finds necessary to stringently limit new development of any sort on the

1 island's south end, preserving the current low-impact uses of that area, and that its population
2 of permanent residents continues to be limited to current sustainable levels.

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body urges the Jekyll Island Authority to ensure that
5 all development and redevelopment plans for Jekyll Island State Park hold promotion of the
6 enjoyment of its natural beauty and unspoiled natural environment as its primary
7 consideration, given the irreplaceable character of those assets, and given the growing
8 economic worth of such values in a world in which they are vanishing daily.

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body urges the Jekyll Island Authority to establish
10 an environmental protection plan that provides information to the public in advance of
11 development or any discussion thereof with potential developers as to where on the island
12 development shall be authorized under such plan.

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body urges the Jekyll Island Authority to ensure that
14 any buffer areas required in connection with any development on the island shall not be
15 considered as an undeveloped portion of the island for purposes of determining what
16 percentages of the island land area are developed or undeveloped.

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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
19 to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the Jekyll Island Authority.